



TO: D.C. State Board of Education Members  
FROM: SBOE Staff  
RE: **STAR Framework Family/General Public Survey Report**  
DATE: November 24, 2021

## Executive Summary

This STAR Framework *Family/General Public Survey Report* is the fourth in a four-part series of reports on input and feedback received from families, principals, teachers, D.C. residents, and experts on D.C.’s school accountability system (i.e., STAR Framework and Rating). The purpose of this report and survey was to understand parents’, guardians’ and other District residents’ experiences with the STAR Framework and Rating, as well as gather feedback on changes they would like to see in D.C.’s school accountability system. A summary of findings is provided below and are based on findings from the 2021 STAR Framework Family/General Public Survey.

A total of 567 people completed the survey, 465 of which identified as a parent or guardian of a District student; 102 identified as other (i.e., District resident (non-parent, school staff, District student, etc.)). Anyone could take the survey.<sup>1</sup>

## Key Findings

- **Parents are not familiar with the STAR Rating** - Only about a third of parent respondents (34%) were moderately to very familiar with the STAR Rating. Parent respondents in Wards 3, 7, and 8 were the least familiar with the STAR Rating. Parent respondents of elementary students were most familiar with the STAR Rating.
- **Parents do not use the STAR Rating when selecting a school nor see it as important when making a school selection** - Two-thirds of parent respondents (68%) did not use the STAR Rating to choose a school for their child. Parent respondents in Wards 5, 7, and 8 showed higher rates of using the STAR Rating to choose a school for their child, as did parent respondents of students enrolled in Pre-K3–4 schools. On importance of the STAR Rating in choosing a school for their child, a plurality of parents (38%) said it was not important at all, and about 30% shared that it was moderately to very important
- **Parents feel that the STAR Rating is reflective of the quality/effectiveness of their child’s school** - Most parent respondents (64%) agreed or strongly agreed that the STAR Rating reflects the quality/effectiveness of their child’s school. Parent respondents who indicated they were either somewhat or moderately familiar with the STAR Rating showed significantly higher rates of agreeing or strongly agreeing with the STAR Rating reflecting quality/effectiveness of a school.

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<sup>1</sup> This report includes 36 respondents to the Spanish version of the Family/General Public Survey. These responses were manually entered and transcribed for open-ended survey items and survey items that invited respondents to choose “other”.





- **There is no agreement on whether to completely eliminate a summative rating or make the current STAR Rating less biased** – When presented with visual examples of school report cards, 41% of parent respondents selected the image/option where “each school receives a single, overall rating”. However, when asked with words about summative rating preferences, a plurality of parents (44%) want a single, summative rating to be eliminated, 33% want to keep the STAR Rating but make it less biased, and only 6% chose no change to the STAR Rating.
- **Parents want student progress in math and ELA, student satisfaction, and teacher turnover/retention data to be used in evaluating a school’s quality/effectiveness.** Parent respondents felt that indicators like: welcoming to parents, teachers’ access to training, and attendance rates should not be used.





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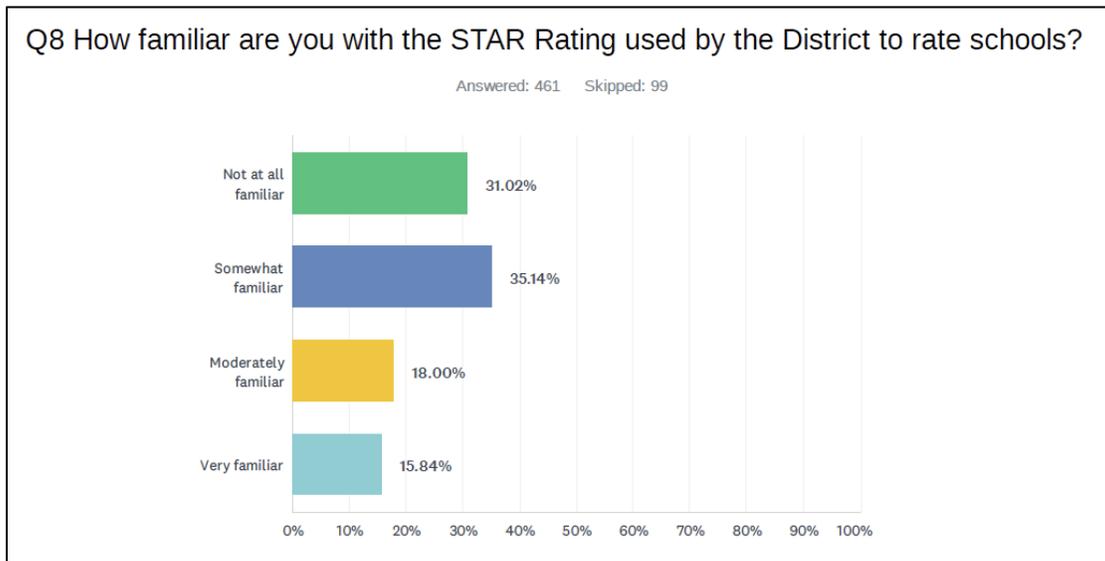
## Parent/Guardian Findings

The following items are responses from parents/guardians, broken down by ward of residence, familiarity with the STAR Rating, school level, and school type where statistically significant differences were found.

### Question 8 – Familiarity with the STAR Rating

Only about a third of parents (34%) were moderately to very familiar with the STAR Rating (see Figure 1 below).

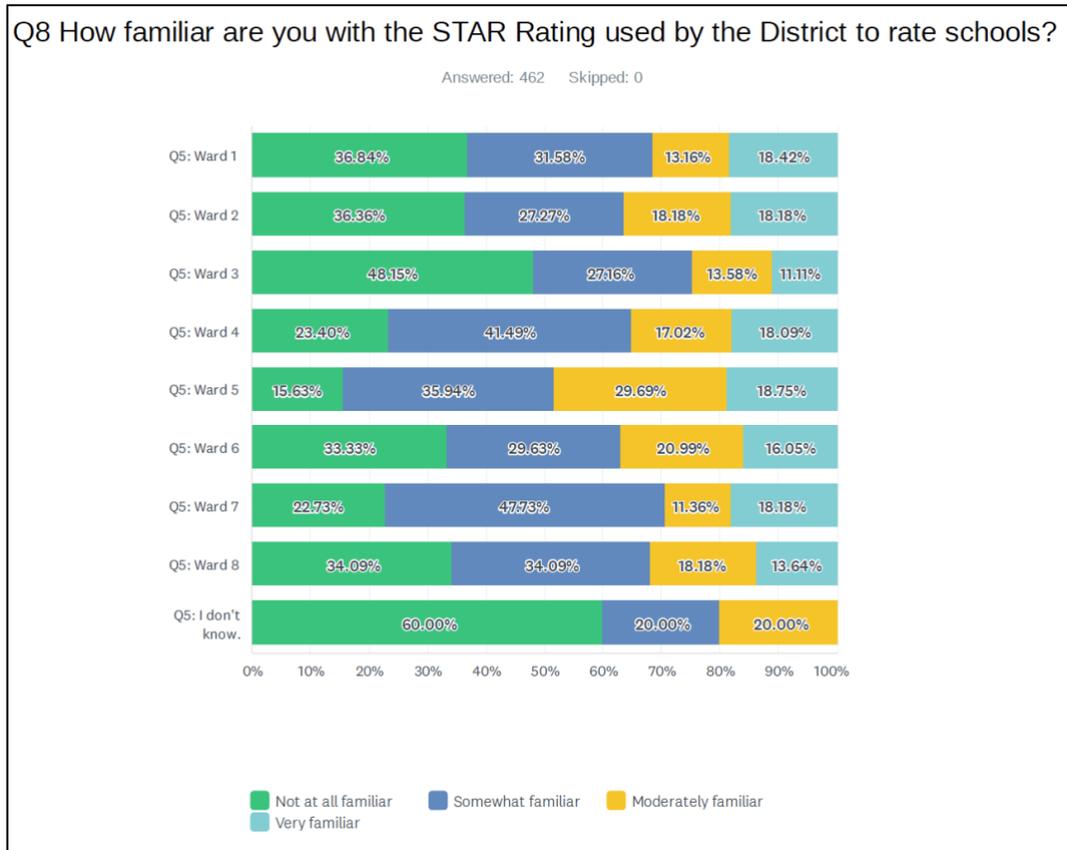
Figure 1- Question 8 – Familiarity with the STAR Rating





Significant differences were found when comparing familiarity of the STAR Rating by ward. Wards 3, 4, 7, and 8 were less familiar than Ward 1, 2, 5, and 6 (see Figure 2 below).

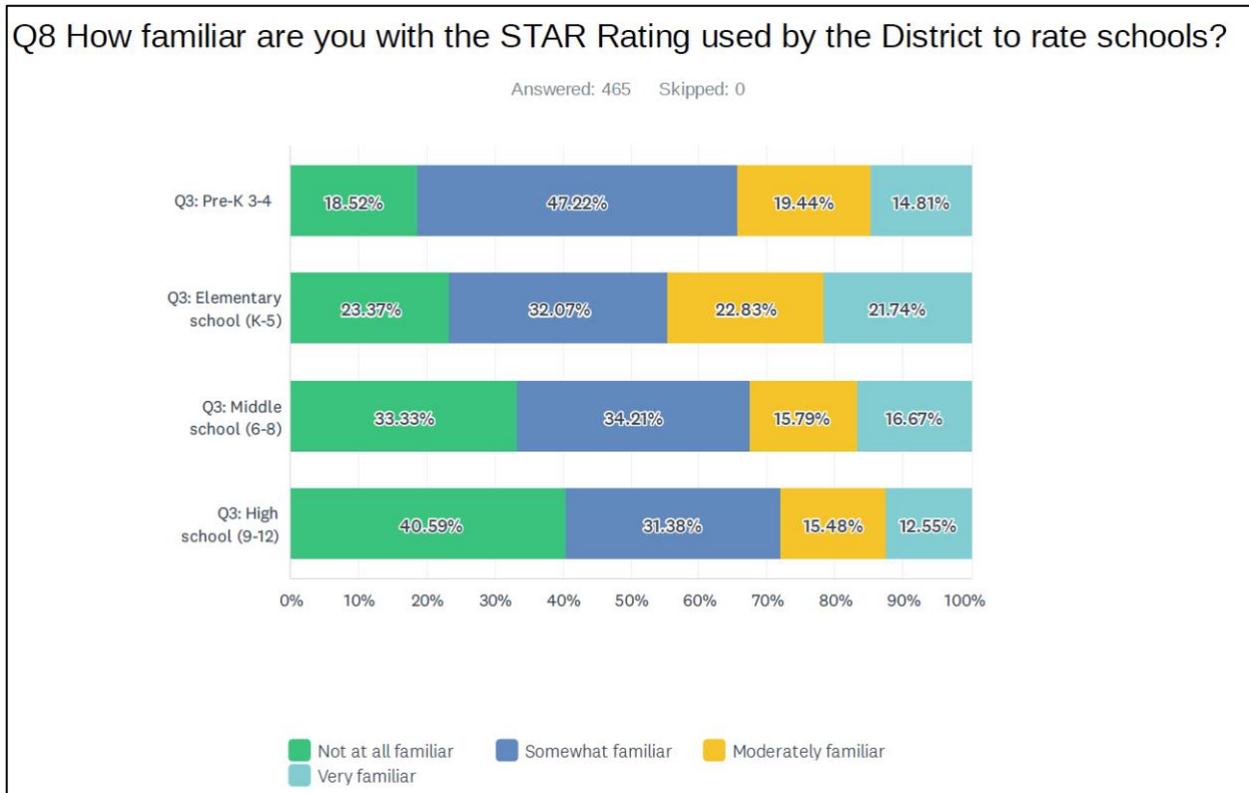
Figure 2- Question 8 – Familiarity with the STAR Rating (Disaggregated by Ward)





Significant differences were found when comparing familiarity of the STAR Rating by school level. Parents of elementary students were more likely than Pre-K3–4, middle, and high school parents to be familiar with the STAR Rating (see Figure 3 below).

Figure 3- Question 8 – Familiarity with the STAR Rating (Disaggregated by School Level)

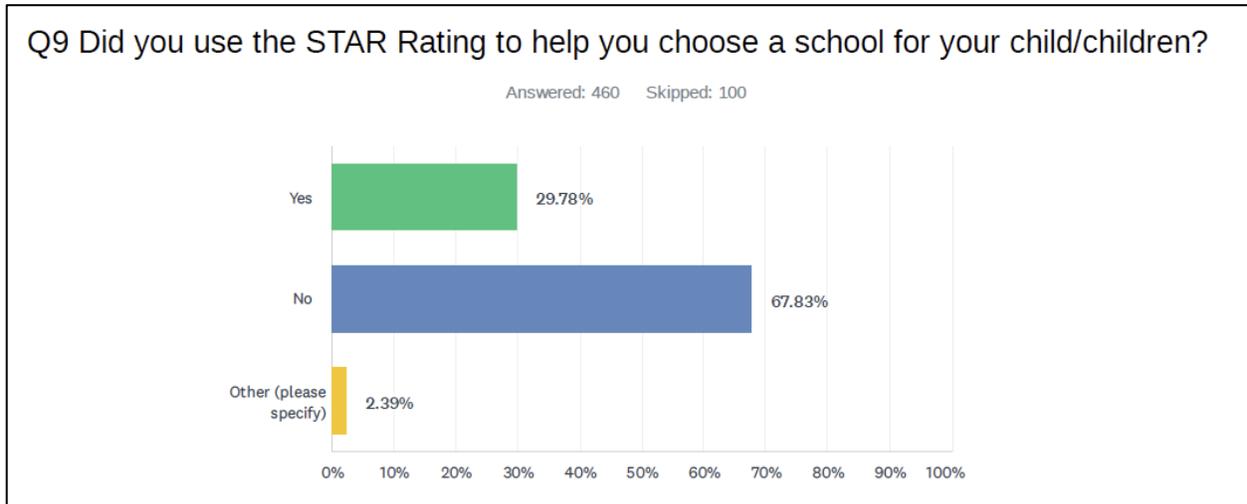




### **Question 9 – Using the STAR Rating When Choosing Schools**

Two-thirds of parents (68%) did not use the STAR Rating to choose a school for their child (see Figure 4 below).

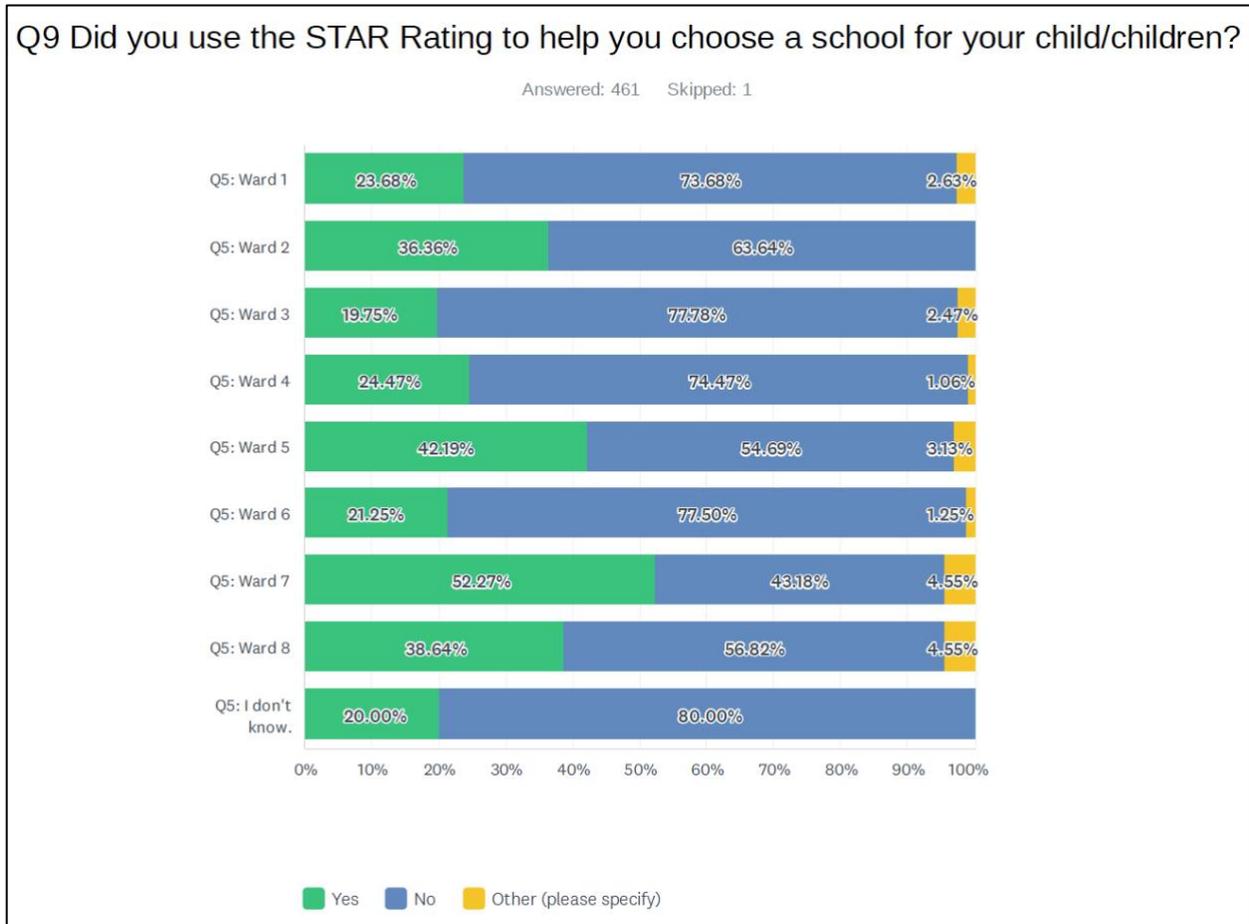
*Figure 4- Question 9 – Using the STAR Rating When Choosing Schools*





Significant differences were found when comparing the extent to which parents used the STAR Rating to help them choose a school for their child by school level. Parents in Wards 5, 7, and 8 showed higher rates of using the STAR Rating to choose a school for their child compared to parents in Wards 1, 3, 4, and 6 (see Figure 5 below).

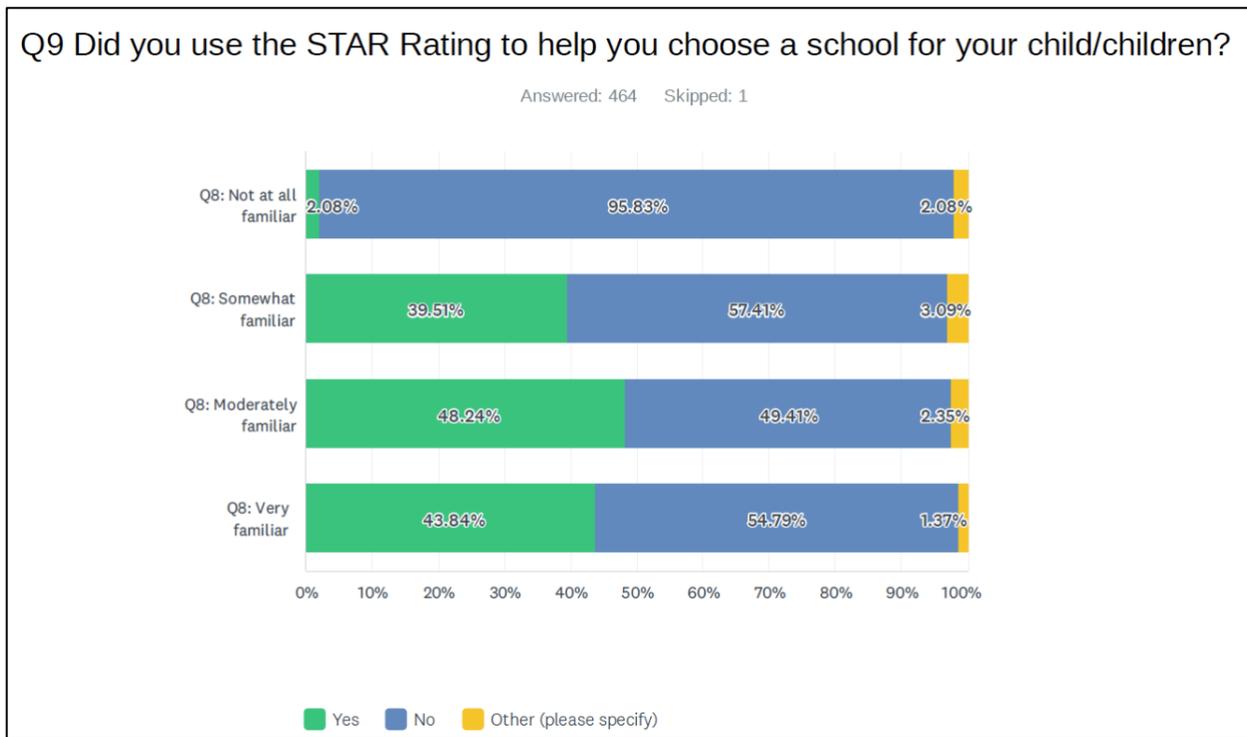
Figure 5- Question 9 – Using the STAR Rating When Choosing Schools (Disaggregated by Ward)





Significant differences were found when comparing the extent to which parents used the STAR Rating to help them choose a school for their child by familiarity with the STAR Rating. Parents who were somewhat to very familiar with the STAR Rating showed higher rates of using the STAR Rating to choose a school for their child compared to parents who indicated they were not at all familiar with the STAR Rating (see Figure 6 below).

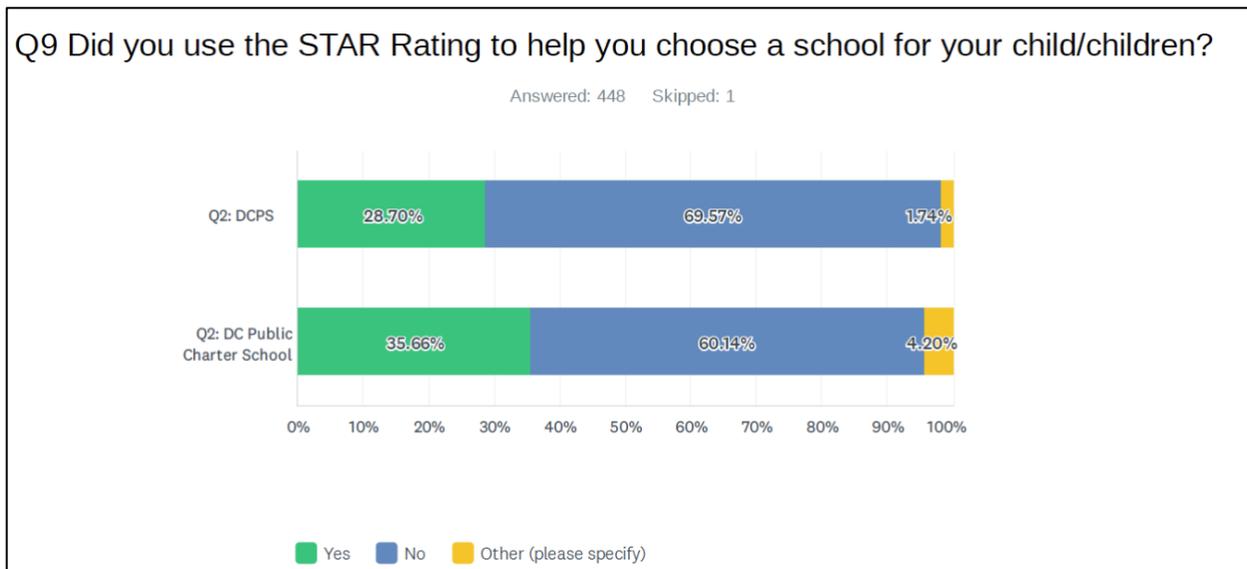
Figure 6- Question 9 – Using the STAR Rating When Choosing Schools (Disaggregated by Familiarity with STAR Rating)





Significant differences were found when comparing the extent to which parents used the STAR Rating to help them choose a school for their child by school type. Parents of students enrolled in public charter schools showed slightly higher rates of using the STAR Rating to choose a school for their child compared to parents who indicated their child is enrolled in a DCPS school (see Figure 7 below).

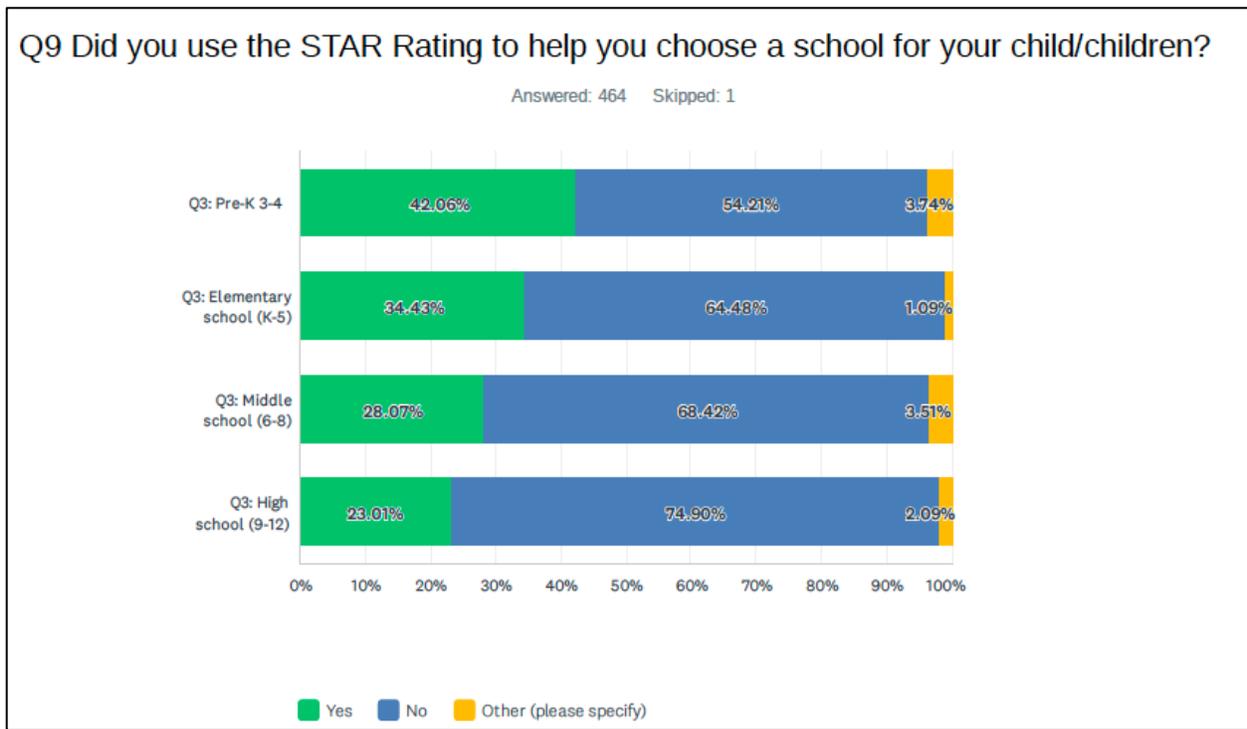
Figure 7- Question 9 – Using the STAR Rating When Choosing Schools (Disaggregated by School Type)





Significant differences were found when comparing the extent to which parents used the STAR Rating to help them choose a school for their child by grade level. Parents of students enrolled in Pre-K3–4 schools showed higher rates of using the STAR Rating to choose a school for their child compared to parents whose children were enrolled in higher grade bands. This trend decreased as grade level increased (see Figure 8 below).

Figure 8- Question 9 – Using the STAR Rating When Choosing Schools (Disaggregated by School Level)



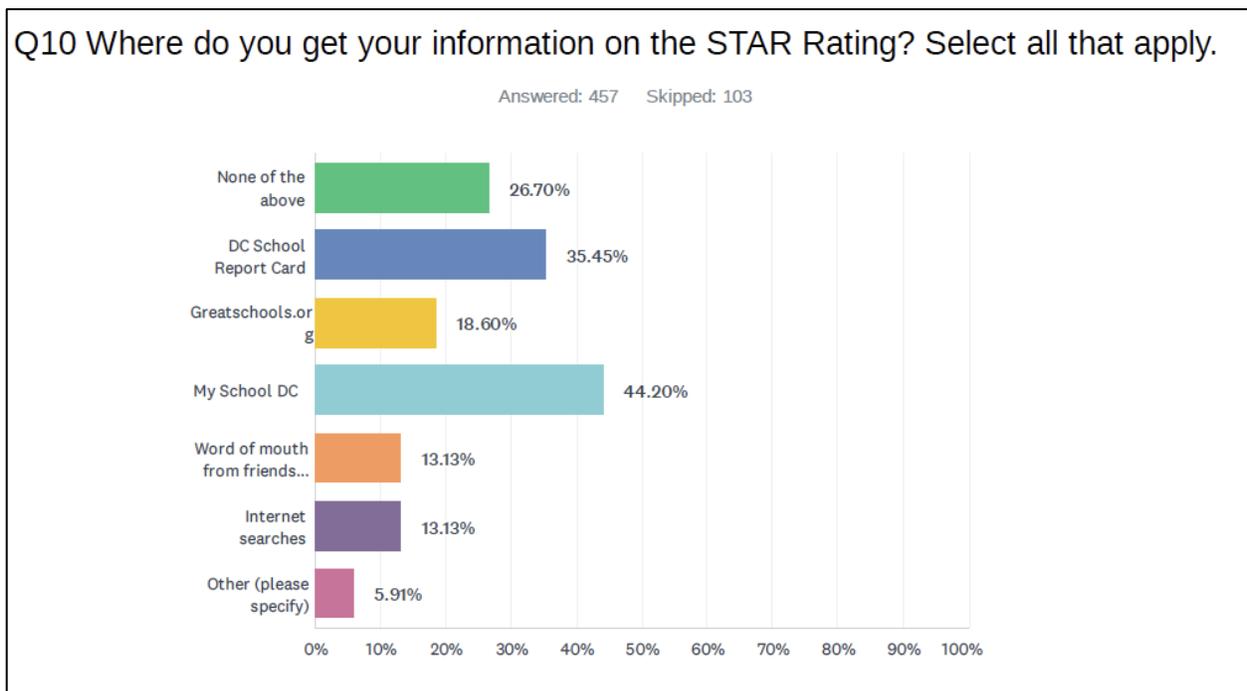


## **Question 10 – Where Families Go For Information on the STAR Rating**

The top three places parents indicated they got information on the STAR Rating were (see Figure 9 below):

1. My School DC (44%)
2. DC School Report Card (35%)
3. None of the options provided (27%)

*Figure 9- Question 10 – Where Families Go For Information on the STAR Rating*

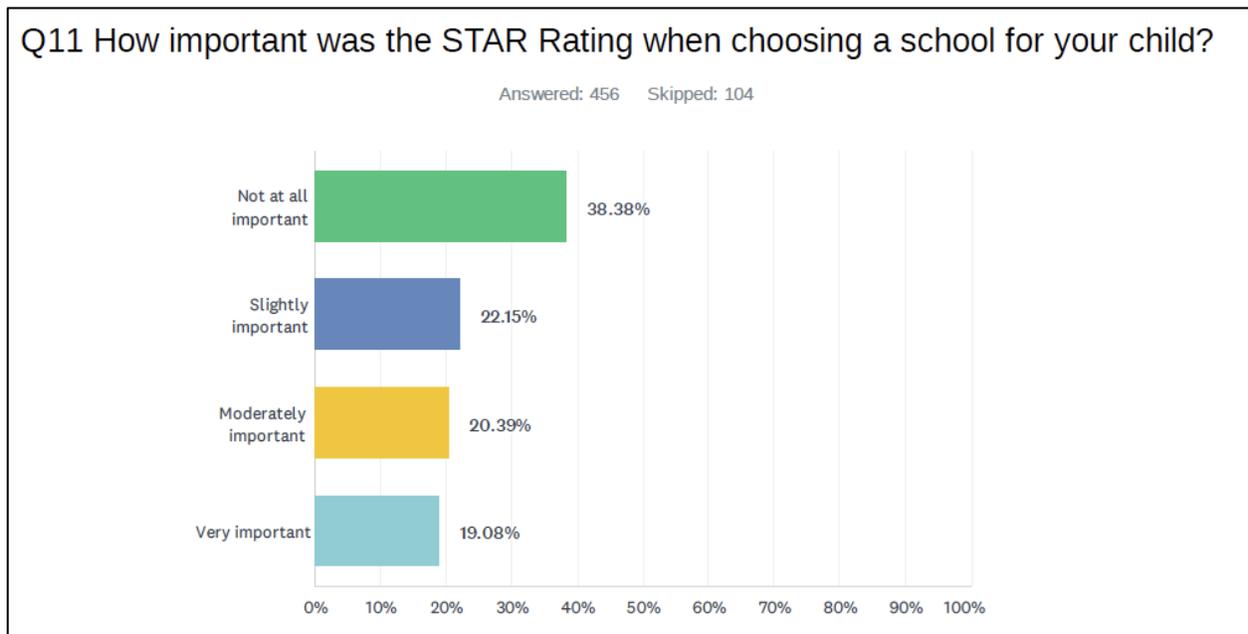




## **Question 11 – Importance of the STAR Rating in Choosing a School**

On importance of the STAR Rating in choosing a school for their child, a plurality of parents (38%) said it was not important at all, and about 30% shared that it was moderately to very important (see Figure 10 below).

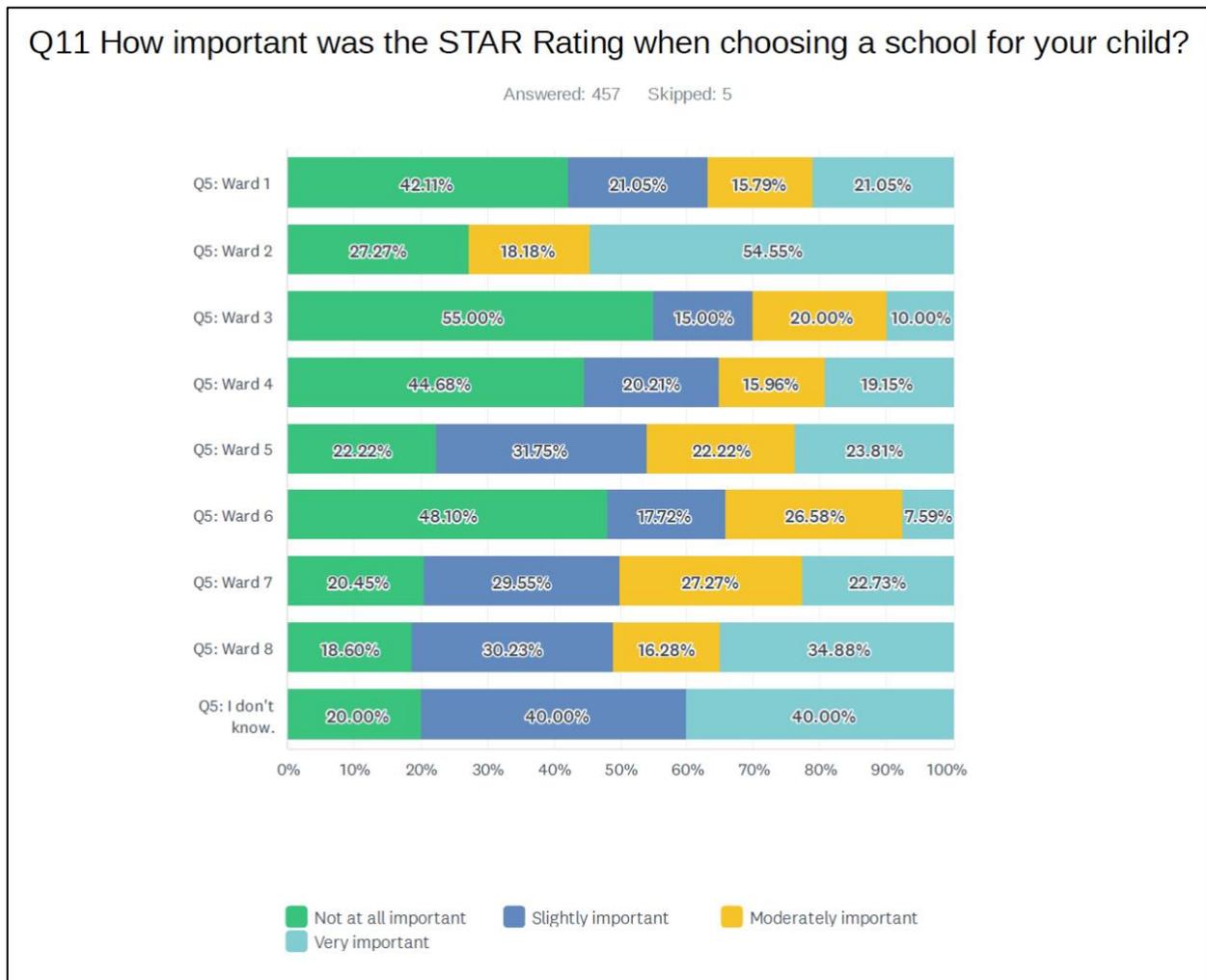
*Figure 10- Question 11 – Importance of the STAR Rating in Choosing a School*





Significant differences were found when comparing the importance of the STAR Rating when choosing a school for their child by ward of residence. Ward 5, 7, and 8 parents showed significantly higher rates of choosing the STAR Rating as moderate to highly important when choosing a school for their child, compared to parents residing in Wards 1, 3, 4 and 6 (see Figure 11 below).

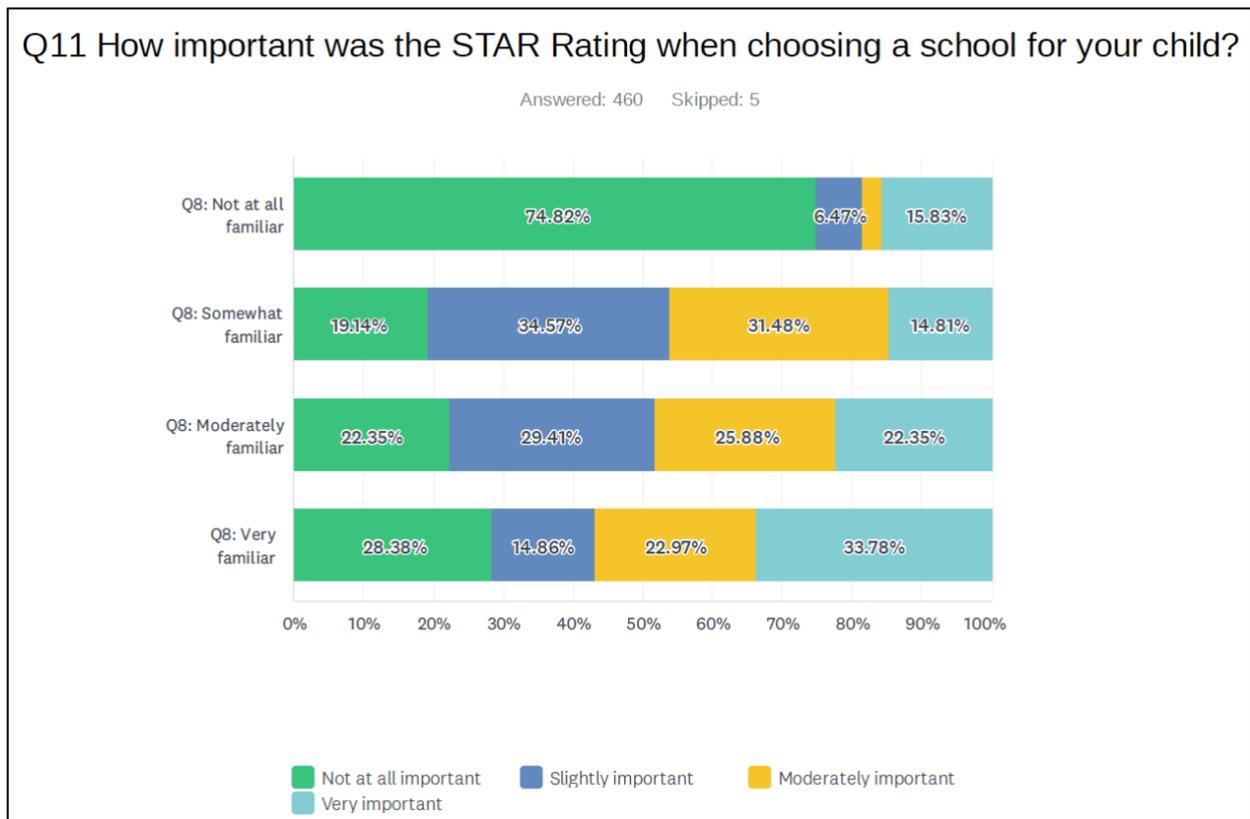
Figure 11- Question 11 – Importance of the STAR Rating in Choosing a School (Disaggregated by Ward)





Significant differences were found when comparing the importance of the STAR Rating when choosing a school for their child by familiarity with the STAR Rating. Parents who indicated they are moderately to very familiar with the STAR Rating showed higher rates of choosing the STAR Rating as moderate to highly important when choosing a school for their child, compared to parents who indicated they were not at all familiar with the STAR Rating (see Figure 12 below).

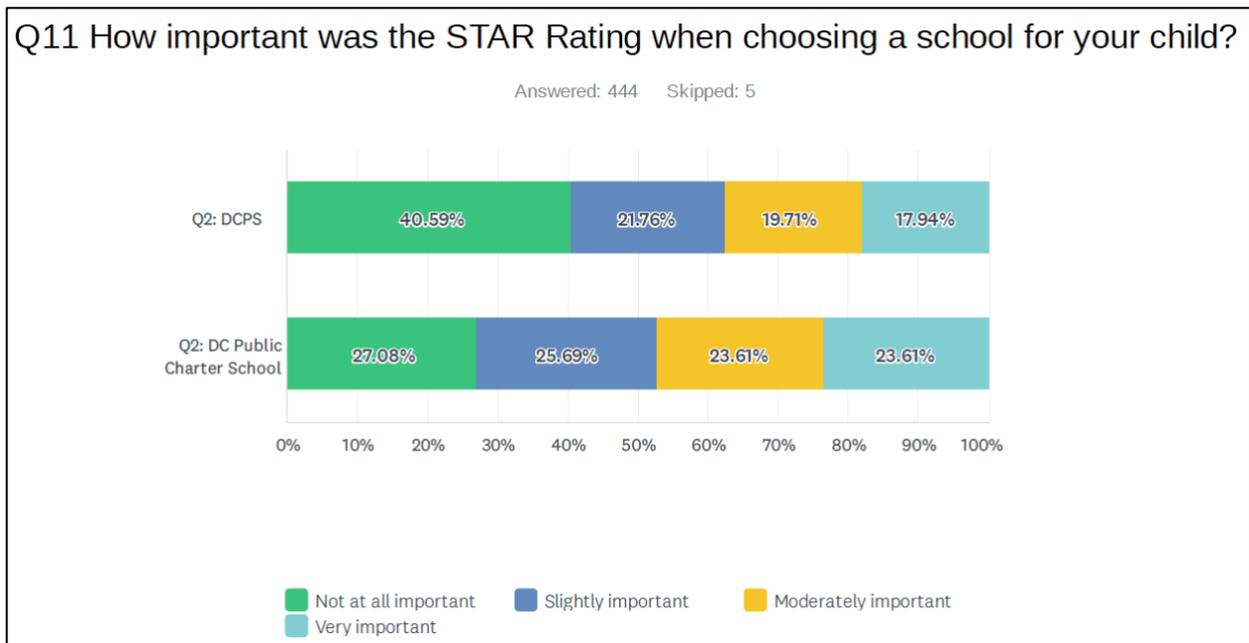
Figure 12- Question 11 – Importance of the STAR Rating in Choosing a School (Disaggregated by Familiarity with STAR Rating)





Significant differences were found when comparing the importance of the STAR Rating when choosing a school for their child by the type of school. Parents who indicated their child attends a D.C. public charter school showed higher rates of choosing the STAR Rating as moderate to highly important when choosing a school for their child, compared to parents who indicated their child attends a DCPS school (see Figure 13 below).

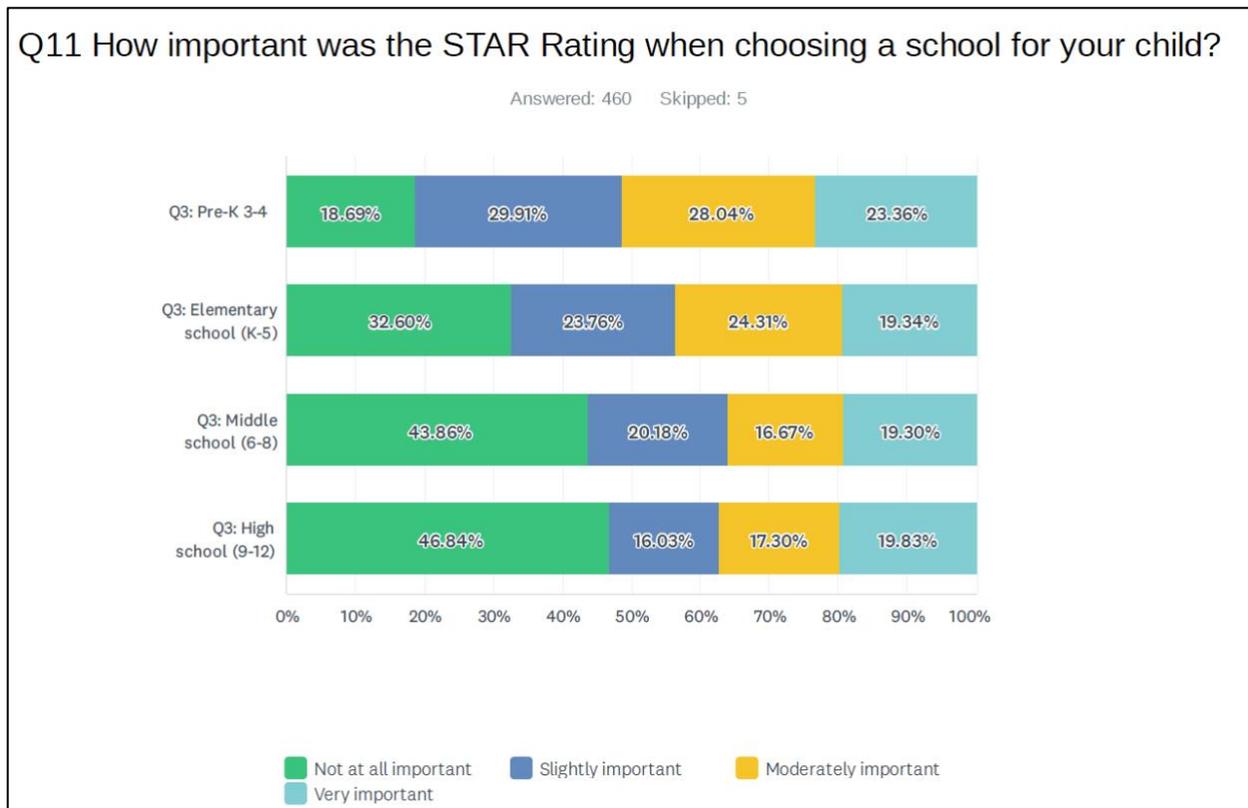
Figure 13- Question 11 – Importance of the STAR Rating in Choosing a School (Disaggregated by School Type)





Significant differences were found when comparing the importance of the STAR Rating when choosing a school for their child by school level. A positive trend in increasing importance of the STAR Rating when choosing a school for their child was found as grade bands increased (see Figure 14 below). This is in line with Question 9’s comparison, where lower grade level families were more likely to use the STAR Rating to choose a school for their child.

Figure 14- Question 11 – Importance of the STAR Rating in Choosing a School (Disaggregated by School Level)

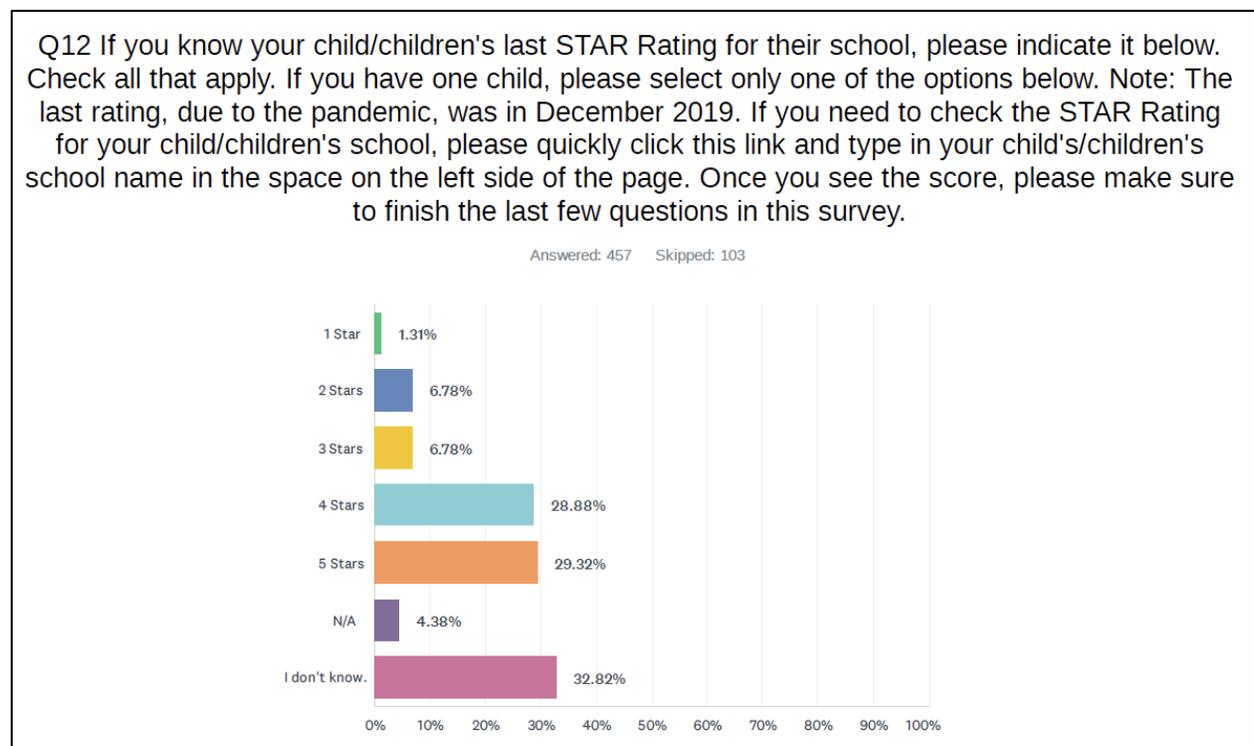




## **Question 12 – STAR Rating of Child/Children in Household**

Most respondents of the survey have kids at higher-rated schools (schools rated 4-5 stars). While a plurality of parents (38%) did not know their child’s school’s STAR Rating, 29% indicated their child attends a 5-star school and 28% a 4-star school. Only 1% of responding parents noted their child attending 1-star rated schools. There did not seem to be a drop off of respondents to the question asking parents what the STAR Rating for their child’s school was, despite offering a link to DC School Report Card (see Figure 15 below).

*Figure 15- Question 12 – STAR Rating of Child/Children in Household*

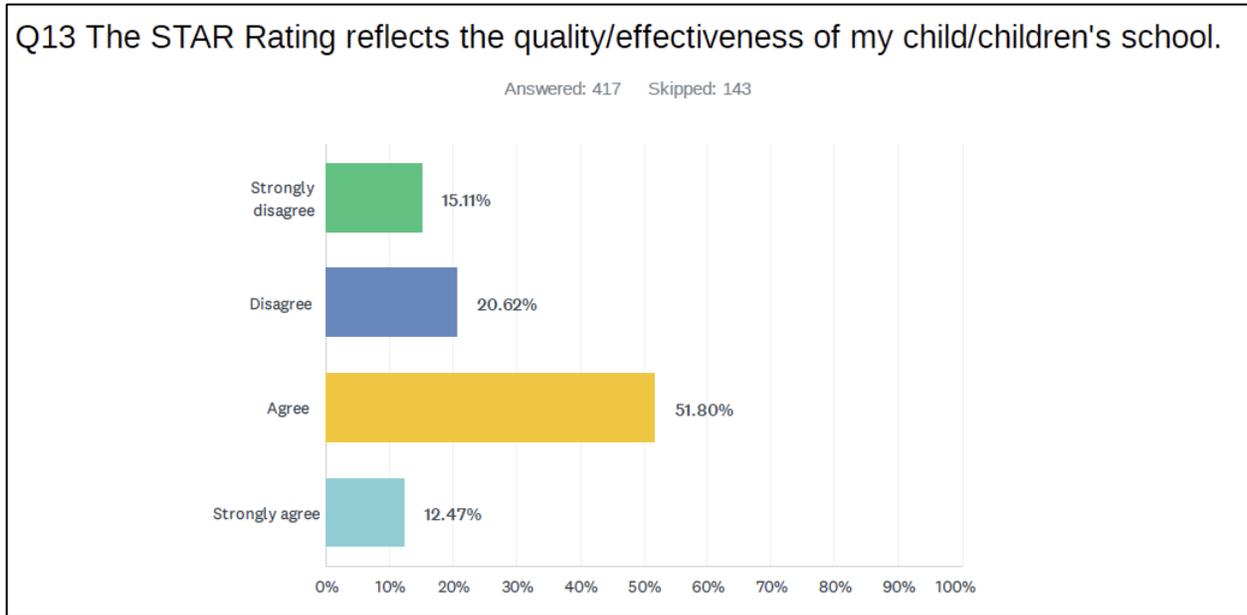




### **Question 13 – STAR Rating as a Reflection of School Quality/Effectiveness**

Most parents (64%) agreed or strongly agreed that the STAR Rating reflects the quality/effectiveness of their child’s school (see Figure 18 below).

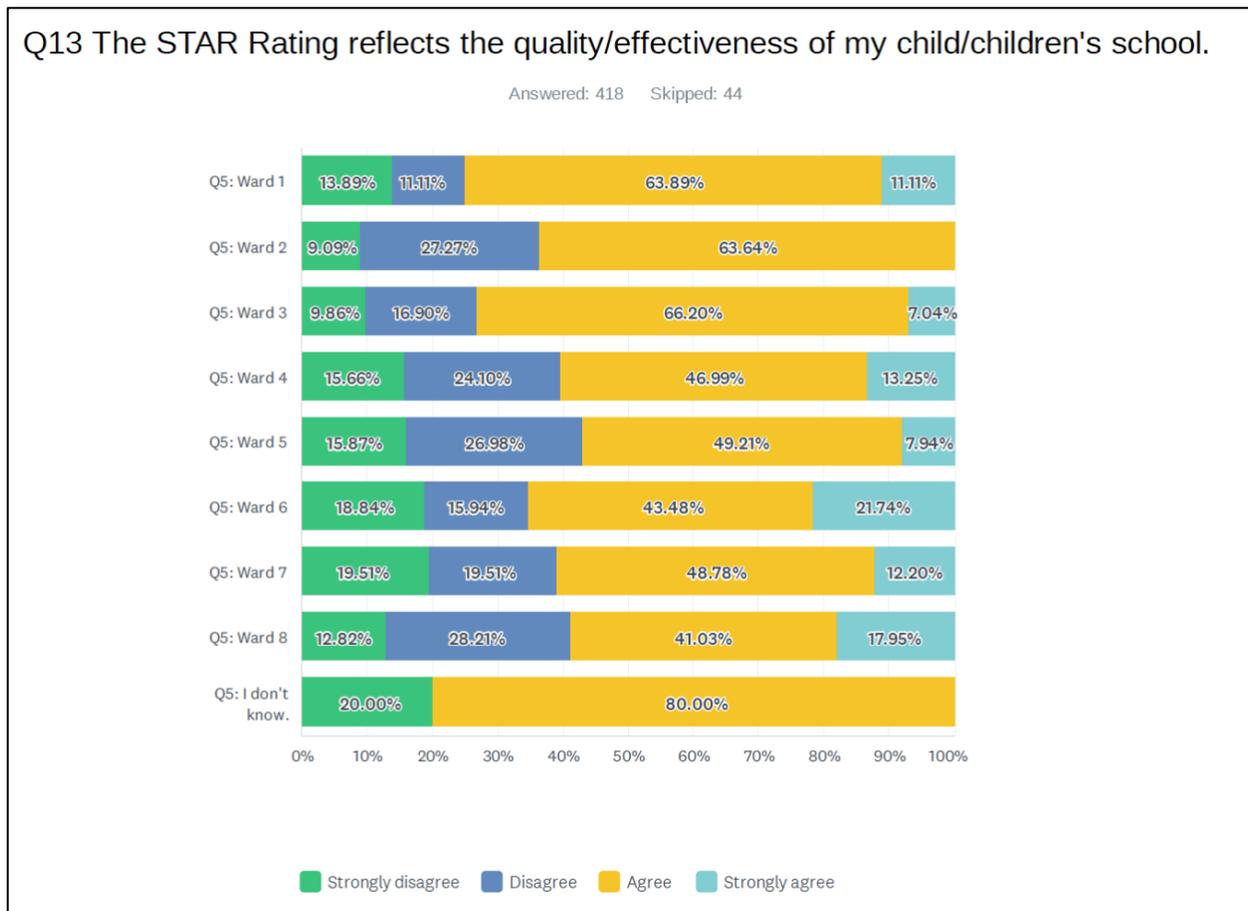
*Figure 16- Question 13 – STAR Rating as a Reflection of School Quality/Effectiveness*





Significant differences were found when comparing the level of quality/effectiveness the STAR Rating reflects for a school by ward of residence. Parents who indicated they reside in Wards 1, 3, and 6 showed significantly higher rates of agreeing or strongly agreeing with the STAR Rating reflecting quality/effectiveness of a school, compared to parents residing in Wards 4, 5, 7 and 8 (see Figure 19 below).

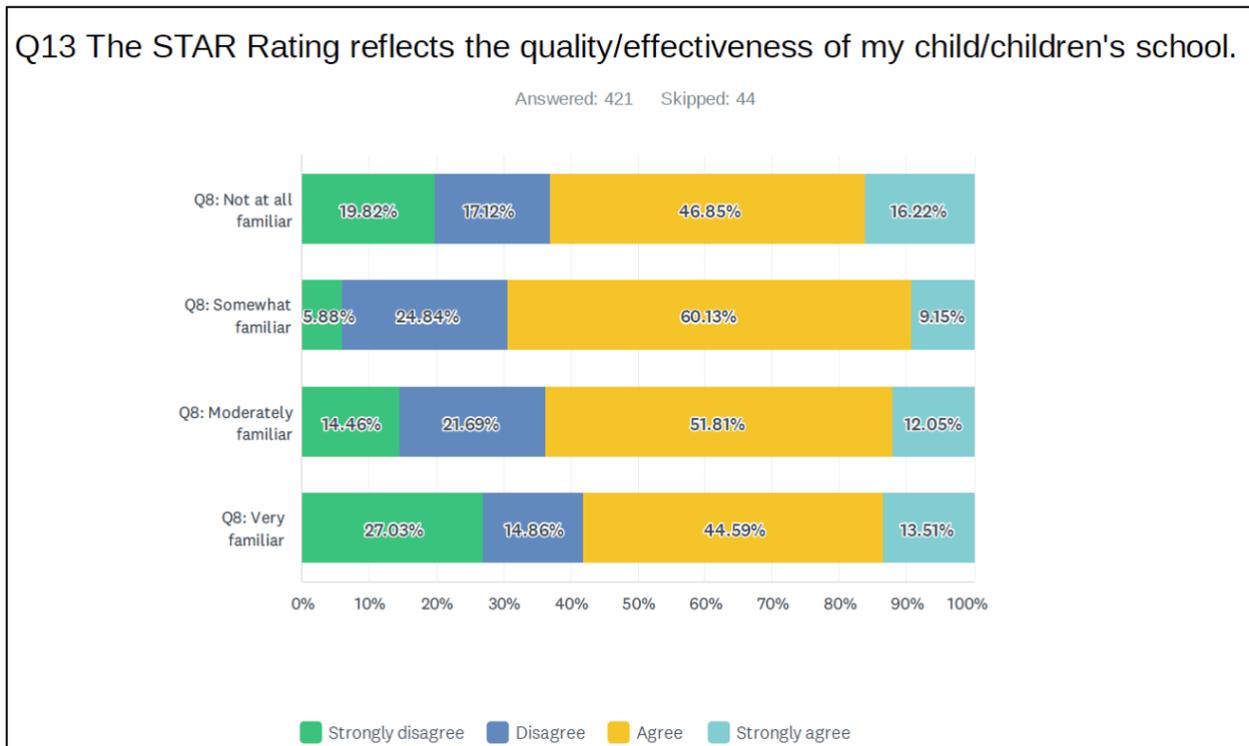
Figure 17- Question 13 – STAR Rating as a Reflection of School Quality/Effectiveness (Disaggregated by Ward)





Significant differences were found when comparing the level of quality/effectiveness the STAR Rating reflects for a school by familiarity with the STAR Rating. Parents who indicated they were either somewhat or moderately familiar with the STAR Rating showed significantly higher rates of agreeing or strongly agreeing with the STAR Rating reflecting quality/effectiveness of a school, compared to parents indicating they were not at all familiar or were very familiar with the STAR Rating (see Figure 20 below).

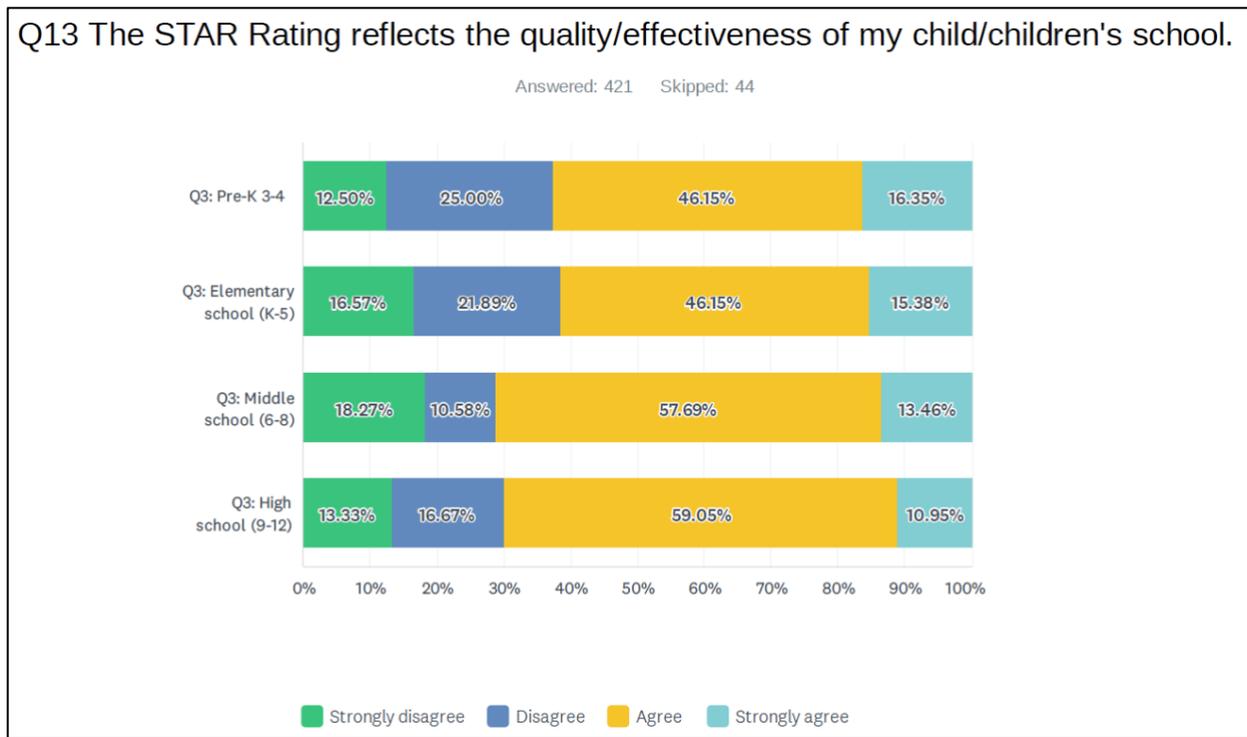
Figure 18- Question 13 – STAR Rating as a Reflection of School Quality/Effectiveness (Disaggregated by Familiarity with STAR Rating)





Significant differences were found when comparing the level of quality/effectiveness the STAR Rating reflects for a school by school level. Parents who indicated their child is enrolled in middle or high school showed significantly higher rates of agreeing with the STAR Rating reflecting quality/effectiveness of a school, compared to parents of students in Pre-K3–4 and elementary school (see Figure 21 below).

Figure 19- Question 13 – STAR Rating as a Reflection of School Quality/Effectiveness (Disaggregated by School Level)



### Question 14 – Examples of Other State School Report Cards [Open-ended]

Out of 229 responding family respondents, the following three choices are ranked from most to least popular (based on write-in answers, multiple selections optional):

- **Choice 1:** In this example, each school receives a single, overall rating. (41%)
- **Choice 2:** In this example, the school does not get a single rating, but each indicator (e.g., student achievement in English language arts) gets a rating. (30%)
- **Choice 3:** In this example, the single, overall rating is not shown on the front page of the at-a-glance school report card. Information on school quality/effectiveness is provided. (28%)

Family members who described none were helpful were in the minority (7%).





## **Question 15 – Indicators that Should Support the Evaluation of a School’s Quality/Effectiveness**

Of the listed indicators<sup>2</sup> parents believed should be part of evaluating a school’s quality/effectiveness:

- The *top three (highest ranked)* were:
  1. Progress students have made in math and reading (78%)
  2. Student satisfaction (67%)
  3. Teacher turnover/retention (67%)
- The *bottom three (lowest ranked)* were:
  1. Welcoming to parents (39%)
  2. Teachers’ access to training (40%)
  3. Attendance rate (45%)

## **Question 16 – Summative Rating Preference**

A plurality of parents (44%) want a single, summative rating to be eliminated and instead provide needed information on a school in an easy-to-read way. About 33% wanted to keep the rating but make it less biased. Only 6% choosing no change to the STAR Rating (see Figure 22 below).<sup>3</sup>

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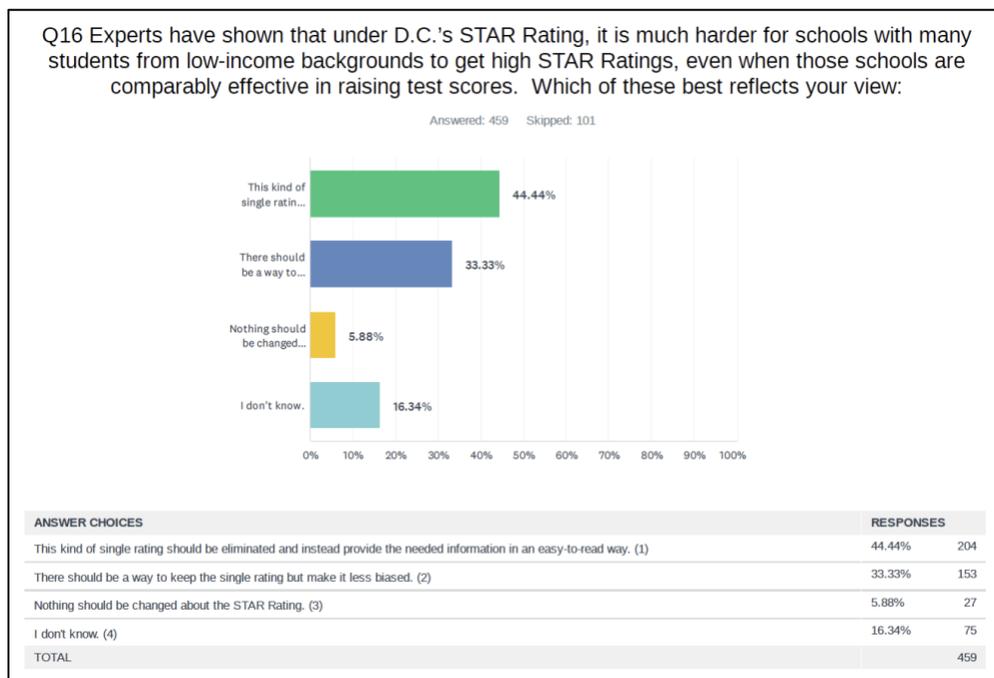
<sup>2</sup> Indicators that respondents could choose from were color coded, with blue text offering indicators currently used in the STAR Rating, and orange text offering indicators not currently used in the STAR Rating. Blue text indicators (featured in the current STAR Framework) included: The percentage of students who have reached “proficiency” on PARCC ELA/ and math assessments, Annual test score growth of students in ELA and math (ES/MS only), Growth in English language proficiency (for English Language Learners), Proportion of students who have re-enrolled at the school in the following year, Attendance rates, Progress of students most in need, Students’ SAT scores (HS Only), AP/IB participation and/or performance (HS only), 4-year graduation rate (HS only). Orange text indicators (not currently in the STAR Framework) included: Suspension rate , Growth in reading achievement at 1st and 2nd grades, A validated indicator of school climate, A measure of a well-rounded curriculum, including a curriculum rich in social studies, sciences, and the arts, Teacher/staff retention, Student safety, A measure of socio-emotional learning.

<sup>3</sup> Note: This is divergent from Question 14, asking family respondents to review a list of examples from other states and write in their responses.





Figure 20- Question 16 – Summative Rating Preference



The majority of Ward 4 parents responded they wanted to eliminate a single summative rating. More parents (i.e., Wards 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8) want to see the elimination of the single summative rating rather than making the single rating less biased. (see Figure 23 below).





Figure 21- Question 16 – Summative Rating Preference (Disaggregated by Ward)

Q16 Experts have shown that under D.C.’s STAR Rating, it is much harder for schools with many students from low-income backgrounds to get high STAR Ratings, even when those schools are comparably effective in raising test scores. Which of these best reflects your view:

Answered: 460 Skipped: 2



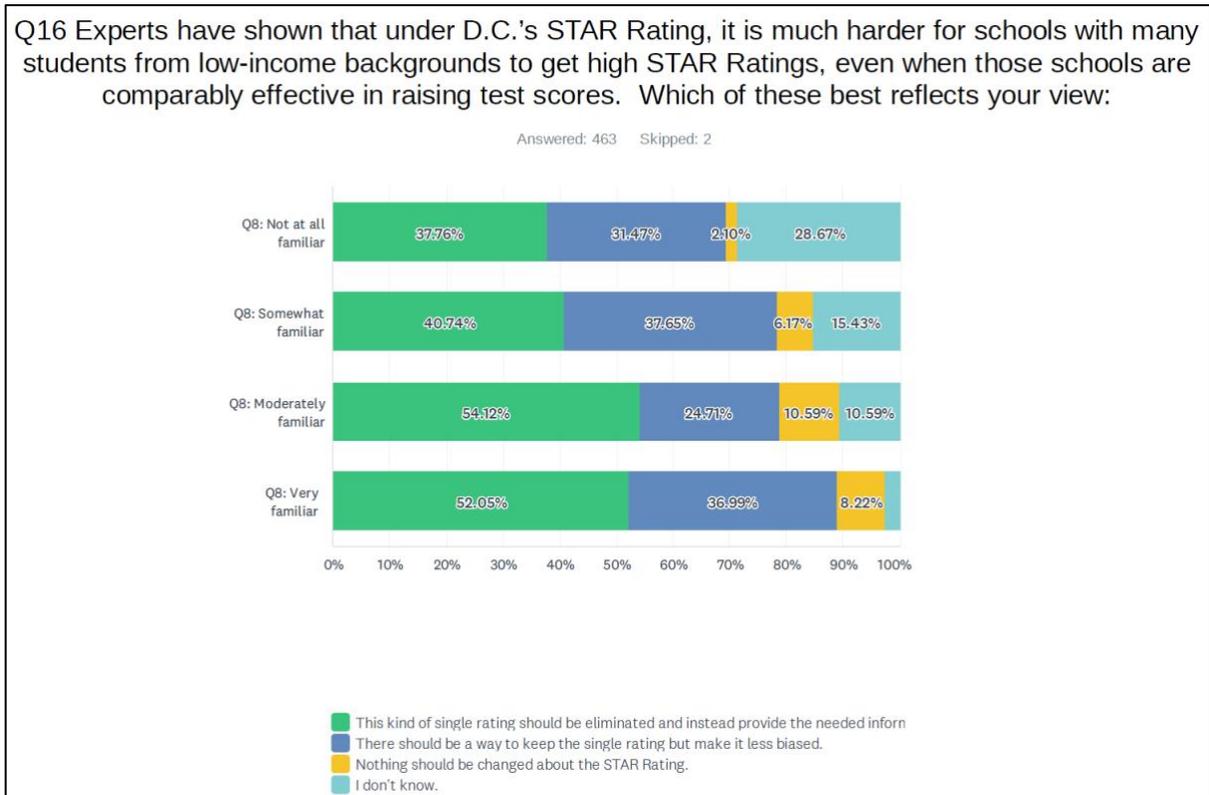
- This kind of single rating should be eliminated and instead provide the needed inform
- There should be a way to keep the single rating but make it less biased.
- Nothing should be changed about the STAR Rating.
- I don't know.





Significant differences were found when comparing preferences of a summative rating by familiarity with the STAR Rating. First, family respondents' rates of choosing "I don't know" decreased as familiarity with the STAR Rating grew stronger. Those who identified as being moderately to very familiar with the STAR Rating were more likely to select the options that either eliminated the single rating or make no changes to the STAR Rating, compared to those who indicated they were not at all familiar to somewhat familiar with the STAR Rating (see Figure 24 below).

Figure 22- Question 16 – Summative Rating Preference (Disaggregated by Familiarity with STAR Rating)





## **Question 24 – Recommendations to Improve the STAR Rating [Open-ended]**

Out of 215 responses from **family and general public respondents**, the *top four themes* that stood out for improving the STAR Rating were:

1. Less focus on academic proficiency scores and more on school quality indicators (23%)
2. Get rid of the STAR Rating/summative rating (18%)
3. Make STAR Rating less biased (10%)
4. Growth (7%)

### **Sample Quotes**

- *“The STAR rating shouldn’t be used until the schools in the District are equitable.”*
- *“The bias needs to move away from only test scores and measure the overall growth of the student, family environment and overall social and emotional growth.”*
- *“It does seem biased toward inequity, and if there is a way to shift the existing score to be more inclusive that would be preferred. If the score goes away, I fear that it will become complex for parents with little time to select schools that might benefit for their child quickly. I also worry that there will become an underground ‘in the know’ parent network, that will exclude under resourced parents, particularly in Wards 7 and 8.”*
- *“Please ensure that parents are able to see how students from different demographics both achieve and also grow at each school. Too often we deem schools ‘good’ schools without considering education and income level of their parents. The strength of a school should show us evidence about how students are doing that might not start out with an advantage but thrive with excellent instruction.”*
- *“I agree that the STAR system negatively impacts schools with large low income populations. It, like all school rankings, reflects socioeconomics and not school quality. Parent, student, and teacher satisfaction and teacher turnover should be more heavily weighted. Also measuring progress/improvement on testing is a better indication of a schools success than just scores.”*





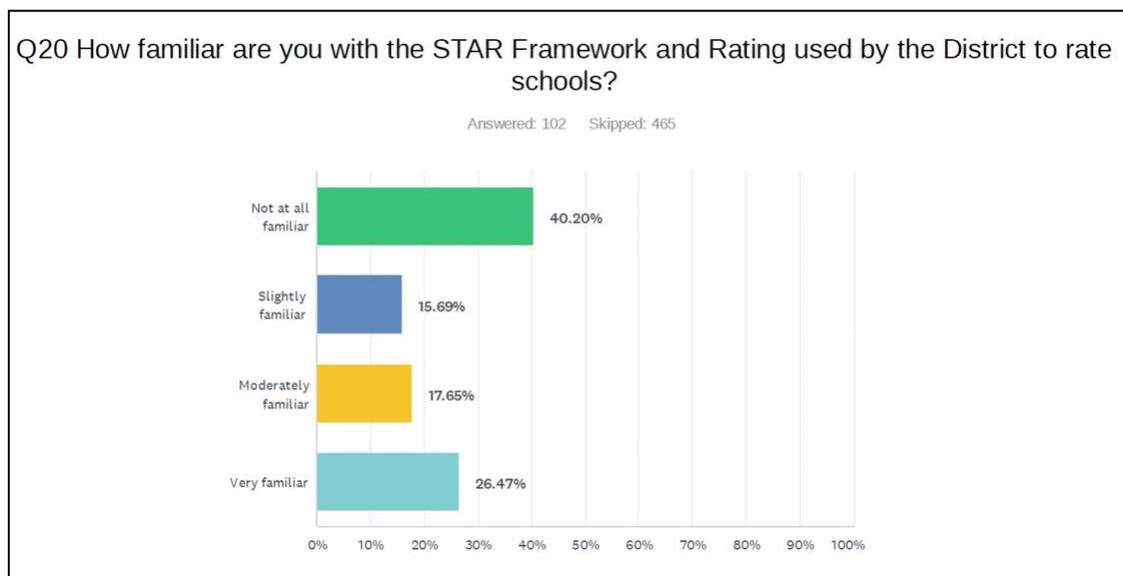
## General Public Findings

The following are responses from public respondents (non-parent/guardians).

### Question 20 – Familiarity with the STAR Rating

A plurality (40%) indicated they were not familiar with the STAR Framework and Rating (see Figure 25 below).

Figure 23- Question 20 – Familiarity with the STAR Rating



### Question 21 – Indicators that Should Support the Evaluation of a School’s Quality/Effectiveness

Of the listed indicators general public respondents believed should be part of evaluating a school’s quality/effectiveness:

- The *top three (highest ranked)* were:
  1. Progress students have made in math and reading (71%)
  2. School safety (67%)
  3. Student satisfaction (66%)
- The *bottom three (lowest ranked)* were:
  1. Percent of students scoring proficient on PARCC ELA/math tests (36%)
  2. Welcoming to parents (43%)
  3. Attendance rate (53%)

Note that the general public’s responses were different from parent/guardian responses to these indicators.

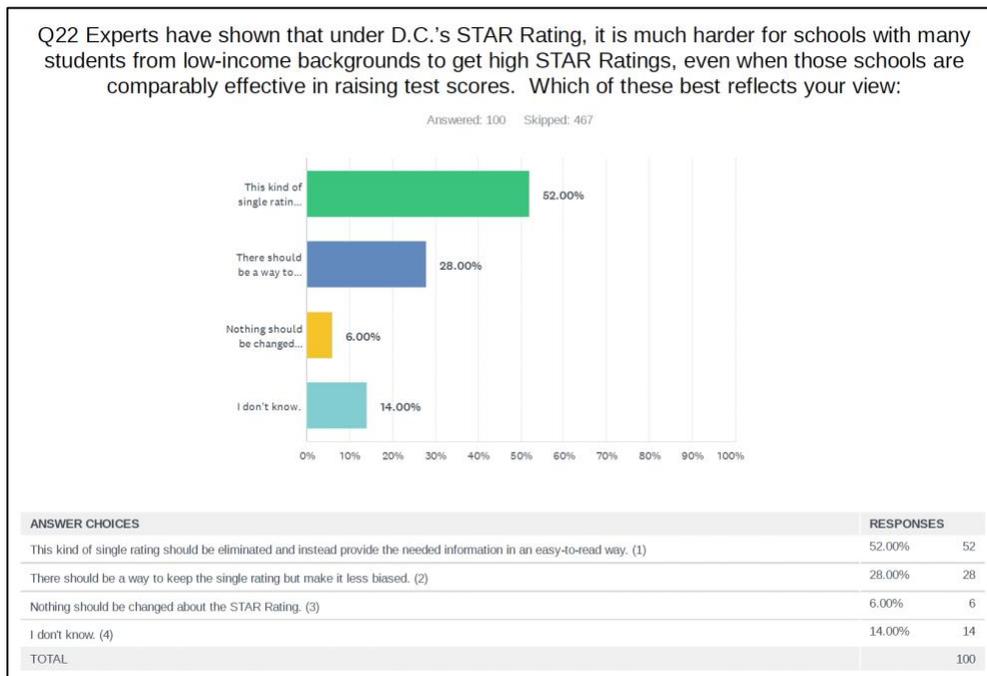




## Question 22 – Summative Rating Preference

Most public (non-parent/guardian) respondents (52%) indicated they prefer the single rating to be eliminated and instead be provided with needed information on schools in an easy-to-read way. The second highest preference was to keep the rating but make it less biased (28%) (see Figure 26 below).

Figure 24- Question 22 – Summative Rating Preference



## Question 23 – Examples of Other State School Report Cards [Open-ended]

Out of 57 responding general public respondents, the following three choices are ranked from most to least popular (based on write-in answers, multiple selections optional):

- **Choice 1:** In this example, each school receives a single, overall rating. (42%)
- **Choice 3:** In this example, the single, overall rating is not shown on the front page of the at-a-glance school report card. Information on school quality/effectiveness is provided. (40%)
- **Choice 2:** In this example, the school does not get a single rating, but each indicator (e.g., student achievement in English language arts) gets a rating. (25%)

Family members who described none were helpful were in the minority (2%).





## Family/General Public Survey Methodology

The purpose of this survey was to understand the experiences of family members and other D.C. residents' experiences with the STAR Framework and Rating, as well as gather feedback on changes they would like to see in D.C.'s school accountability system. Aside from sharing on their social media sites, the State Board asked D.C. Public Schools (DCPS) and D.C. public charter school principals in all eight wards to help distribute the survey, as well as education organizations and agencies<sup>4</sup> via email on October 18, 2021; it closed on November 22, 2021.

## Parent/Guardian Respondent Demographics<sup>5</sup>

### *School Level of Child/Children*

- Pre-K3–4 – 108 parents/guardians (23%)
- Elementary school – 184 parents/guardians (40%)
- Middle school – 114 parents/guardians (25%)
- High school – 239 parents/guardians (51%)

### *School Type of Child/Children*

- DC Public School (DCPS) – 345 parents/guardians (74%)
- DC public charter school – 144 parents/guardians (31%)
- DCPS Alternative – 3 parents/guardians (1%)
- DCPS Selective – 33 parents/guardians (7%)
- Other School Types – 12 parents/guardians (3%)

### *Ward of Residence*

- Ward 1 – 38 parents/guardians (8%)
- Ward 2 – 11 parents/guardians (2%)
- Ward 3 – 81 parents/guardians (18%)
- Ward 4 – 94 parents/guardians (20%)
- Ward 5 – 64 parents/guardians (14%)
- Ward 6 – 81 parents/guardians (18%)
- Ward 7 – 44 parents/guardians (10%)
- Ward 8 – 44 parents/guardians (10%)

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<sup>4</sup> The Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE), the Deputy Mayor of Education (DME), the Washington Teachers' Union (WTU), EmpowerK12, EmpowerEd, Parents Amplifying Voices in Education (PAVE), Senior High Alliance of Parents, Principals and Educators (SHAPPE), Coalition for DC Public Schools and Communities (C4DC), and D.C. Public Charter School Board (PCSB) Wednesday Bulletin, and the Ward 6 Public School Parents Organization.

<sup>5</sup> Demographic questions, like survey items, were optional for survey participants to respond to.





### *Race/Ethnicity of Parent/Guardian*

- American Indian or Alaskan Native – 4 parents/guardians (1%)
- Asian – 24 parents/guardians (5%)
- Black or African American – 146 parents/guardians (32%)
- Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander – 1 parents/guardians (1%)
- White – 253 parents/guardians (55%)
- Preferred not to say – 34 parents/guardians (7%)
- Selected Hispanic, Latino/a, or Spanish origin – 49 parents/guardians (11%)

### *2019 STAR Rating Status of Child/Children's School*

- 1 Star – 2 parents/guardians (5%)
- 2 Stars – 8 parents/guardians (19%)
- 3 Stars – 8 parents/guardians (19%)
- 4 Stars – 12 parents/guardians (29%)
- 5 Stars – 4 parents/guardians (10%)
- Did not recall or not applicable – 8 parents/guardians (20%)

## **General Public Respondent Demographics<sup>6</sup>**

### *Ward of Residence*

- Ward 1 – 7 respondents (4%)
- Ward 2 – 4 respondents (4%)
- Ward 3 – 24 respondents (25%)
- Ward 4 – 18 respondents (19%)
- Ward 5 – 12 respondents (12%)
- Ward 6 – 8 respondents (8%)
- Ward 7 – 7 respondents (8%)
- Ward 8 – 8 respondents (8%)

### *Race/Ethnicity*

- American Indian or Alaskan Native – none
- Asian – 3 respondents (3%)
- Black or African American – 32 respondents (32%)
- Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander – none
- White – 52 respondents (52%)
- Preferred not to say – 13 respondents (13%)
- Selected Hispanic, Latino/a, or Spanish origin – 9 respondents (9%)

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<sup>6</sup> Demographic questions, like survey items, were optional for survey participants to respond to.

